BULLETIN ON AGEING

No. 2/1993

AN ARTICLE explaining the global targets on ageing for the year 2001 begins this issue of the Bulletin. *It is followed, under the rubric of United Nations activities, by short reports on the thirty-third session of the Commission for Social Development, the fifth Inter-Agency Meeting on Ageing and a preparatory meeting for the International Conference on Population and Development to be held in 1994.*

This issue also contains short descriptions of the European Year of Older Persons and Solidarity between Generations, which takes place in 1993; a joint American and Dutch project on ethics and the care of the elderly; and, under the rubric of national activities, short reports from Canada, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Japan. A description of the activities of the International Federation of Associations of the Elderly (FIAPA) appears under the section on activities of non-governmental organizations.

Of great importance is the questionnaire on the back page of this issue, which it is hoped will be completed by all Bulletin *readers to enable the Ageing Unit of the United Nations to update its mailing list.*

United Nations activities

Global targets on ageing

Background

In 1982, over 1,000 delegates from 124 Member States, international bodies and non-governmental organizations, gathered at Vienna at the World Assembly on Ageing and adopted the International Plan of Action on Ageing. The General Assembly endorsed the Plan later the same year at its thirty-seventh session.

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Since that time, the Plan, with its 62 recommendations for action, has served as the international blueprint for the development of policies and programmes on ageing.

It is possible to say that the world has not been quite the same since the historic decisions taken by the World Assembly on Ageing. Concrete action at the international level has occurred in the intervening years, including the establishment of the International Institute on Ageing in Malta, the African Society of Gerontology and the Banyan Fund: A World Fund for Ageing; the designation of 1 October as the International Day for the Elderly; the launching of a global information campaign on ageing in 1992; and the adoption of the United Nations Principles for Older Persons and a set of global targets for the year 2001.

Yet it must also be said that these major initiatives have not led to unqualified progress in the implementation of the Plan. Several factors have contributed to limiting such progress; the most obvious one in many developing and some other countries has been a contraction of the material basis for development. Other factors

A grandfather and his granddaughter, watching the pigeons in Venice

Published by United Nations Office at Vienna, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, P.O. Box 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria.

A woman spinning in Pochampalli, India

for this lack of progress include the failure to realize how society can benefit from population ageing and from the vast collective experience and expertise of its older members. Or, an unwillingness to confront the cost of empowering its older members, and the cost of adjusting from a youthful to a mature population. Failure to pay the cost of adjustment to population ageing not only runs the risk of losing the valuable contribution of older members of society, but could also endanger solidarity between the generations.

Why set global targets on ageing?

In a sense, the global picture presented by ageing seems paradoxical.

First, an excellent Plan of Action exists for anybody who wants to contribute to addressing one of the major issues of our time. Yet, as noted above, progress in its implementation has been less than satisfactory.

Secondly, although the number of national entities and international organizations (mostly non-governmental organizations dealing with ageing), as well as their activities, has grown substantially, insufficient coordination has hampered concerted action.

Thirdly, considerable human as well as financial resources seem to be available, from both the public and the private sectors. But ways and means of tapping them have not yet been devised, preventing the development and realization of many useful projects, especially in developing countries.

A way out of this quandary was suggested by a simple idea: to narrow the broad and general recommendations of the Plan of Action into a set of attainable and, where possible, measurable targets.

Setting the targets

Right from the beginning of the target-setting process, certain crucial choices had to be made: between what was desirable in the field of ageing and what was feasible for Governments to adopt. It was likewise recognized that a distinction had to be made between global and national targets.

Setting global targets had the straightforward aim of consolidating, through partnership, international activities in the field of ageing.

Setting national targets was more complex in that the formulation of any social strategy requires an adjustment to the specific cultural context and, therefore, cannot be imposed from outside, even if it is approved by consensus at the intergovernmental level. In other words, the diversity of national situations and specific needs would make it difficult to attempt anything more than a general guide to help Member States begin their own target-setting processes.

Consequently, when the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office at Vienna was assigned the lead role in the target-setting process, an initial set of global targets was developed over several years, in consultation with all the major partners in the United Nations programme on ageing.

Eight global targets

Incorporating the range of comments received from the target-setting process into one short, practical document was a complex exercise. It was recognized that setting technical targets would require considerable amounts of time and resources. Instead, it was agreed that promotional targets would better serve to raise awareness of the need to galvanize action in achieving the global targets.

The resulting document (A/47/339) was submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session on the tenth anniversary of the Plan of Action in October 1992, and adopted at that session. It had two sections: the first set out eight global targets together with some enabling steps for each one for the decade 1992-2001; the second comprised a guide for national target-setting in the priority areas of infrastructure, health and nutrition, housing, family, education

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and media, social welfare and employment and income security.

The targets and the enabling steps for their implementation will involve global, national and community development. Development is about people. Thus, the primary purpose of the targets and enabling steps, as developmental activities, is to expand opportunities for older persons to address their needs better and to realize their full potential.

It is further assumed that the elderly, their families and their communities must be provided with opportunities for contributing to, as well as participating in, the process of target-setting, strategy formulation and implementation at all levels, including in particular the national level.

The road ahead

After the global targets were adopted by the General Assembly, attention focused on their achievement. Some of the prerequisites identified during the consultation process included:

- **Continuing dialogue, cooperation and initiative by the specialized agencies concerned;**
- **Assessing periodically the infrastructure and resources of the United Nations devoted to ageing;**
- **Convening one or more meetings on target-setting in each of the five regions of the world;**
- **Elaborating bilateral and multilateral programmes of cooperation between Member States, bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to be focused on reaching selected targets;**
- **Including older persons as active participants in development programmes, particularly in strategies for community development;**
- **Measuring progress in reaching the targets during the quadrennial review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing.**

Throughout the decade, there will be several special opportunities for promoting the targets, and seeking cooperation in reaching them, for example:

- **In 1994, the International Year of the Family and the International Conference on Population and Development**
- **In 1995, the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year, the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace; the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders**
- **In 1997 and 2001, in the fourth and fifth quadrennial reviews of the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing**
- **In 1999, the observance of the International Year of the Elderly.**

The United Nations will continue to provide a unifying leadership to encourage the many decentralized activities to take place, while relying on the continuing generosity of spirit of all concerned that characterized the first phase in the process of setting the targets.

A summary of the eight global targets and their objectives

1. *Support countries in setting national targets on ageing:* To enable countries to assess their national ageing situation, identify priorities and facilitate international cooperation and the transfer of aid, skills and technologies.

2. *Generate support for integrating ageing into national and international development plans and programmes:* To ensure that countries wishing to adjust national development plans and resource allocation to respond to population ageing can receive the expert advice and assistance of international development agencies.

3. *Generate support for community-based programmes of care and participation of older persons:* To secure international support for developing and implementing programmes on ageing that balance the care-needs of the elderly, with the contributions they can make to their communities.

4. *Improve cross-national research on ageing, including harmonization of terminology and methodology:* To provide standardized and reliable instruments for cross-national comparison, assessment and planning.

5. *Include an item on ageing in international events and meetings of relevance:* To raise awareness of the links between population ageing and wider economic, social, political and development issues.

6. *Establish a global network of senior volunteers for social and economic development:* To draw on and channel the accumulated wisdom and skills of older persons in support of United Nations development, environment and peace programmes.

7. *Facilitate closer cooperation among non-governmental organizations on ageing.*

8. *Facilitate closer cooperation among intergovernmental organizations on ageing.*

Note: Regarding global targets 7 and 8, the objective is to ensure that the experience gained by individual organizations and in specific regions, for programmes and projects on ageing, is pooled into an inventory of good practices.

Commission for Social Development

The thirty-third session of the Commission for Social Development took place at Vienna from 8 to 17 February 1993. During the session, the Commission convened an ad hoc informal working group to consider the third review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, the first and second such exercises having occurred in 1985 and 1989.

The third review and appraisal was based on a report of the Secretary-General on the subject (E/CN.5/1993/7), the intention of which was to complement, not repeat, existing information on global ageing developed by the United Nations. The report and its recommendations were based on information garnered from questionnaires sent to all Member States and bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, as well as non-governmental organizations, from the activities of the tenth anniversary year of the World Assembly on Ageing, and from other sources available to the United Nations Secretariat.

The questionnaires were designed to be brief and direct, and to elicit quantifiable data. Completed questionnaires were returned by 77 Member States, 14 bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and 23 non-governmental organizations. The information obtained should prove useful in providing a more accurate data baseline for future reviews. In addition, the wealth of data obtained provides a useful pool of information for research, and programme and policy activities for the United Nations and other interested parties.

The report was organized to provide an overview of the impact of population ageing particularly in developing countries, as well as international and regional achievements in the field of ageing since the second review. The report ended with conclusions and recommendations in the form of global and national targets for implementing the Plan of Action and represented an attempt by the United Nations to make a case for the need to recognize and address the dramatic ageing of the world's population. It documented the progress made at the national, regional and international levels to address the challenge and opportunity that ageing represented. It also clearly revealed that the task of creating a world, as well as local communities, where all the aged can grow older with dignity, choice and opportunities was a daunting, but noble challenge.

The report further indicated that while Member States, bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations had made major commitments to this task, it was also clear that, for the developing countries especially, it had only begun.

The Economic and Social Council was recommended by the Commission to adopt its draft resolution on the third review and appraisal. This resolution, *inter alia*, noted with appreciation the innovative and forward-looking approach employed in the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General, endorsed its recommendations, providing a pragmatic focus for the broad and ideal goals of the Plan of Action and for accelerating its implementation into the next millenium, and welcomed the new conceptual framework and operational nature of the United Nations programme on ageing, provided by the United Nations Principles for Older Persons, the Proclamation on Ageing, and the global targets for the year 2001, to further the implementation of the Plan of Action in the current decade.

The third review and appraisal will be submitted, through the Economic and Social Council, to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session in 1993, for its adoption.

An elderly Russian couple

Fifth Inter-Agency Meeting on Ageing

The fifth Inter-Agency Meeting on Ageing was held at Vienna from 18 to 19 February 1993, immediately following the thirty-third session of the Commission for Social Development. The meeting was convened to review current activities of bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, to examine the implications for that system of the third review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, to discuss system-wide programmes of cooperation for reaching selected targets on ageing by the year 2001, and to identify mechanisms for

strengthening the United Nations Trust Fund for Ageing.

The meeting was attended by representatives of nine bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, and chaired by the Chief of the Developmental Social Welfare and Social Integration Branch.

In reviewing current activities of the United Nations system in the field of ageing, the Director of the Social Development Division, pointed out that 1992 had been very useful in raising awareness, particularly through the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Plan of Action. In the following decade, an action-oriented approach would be needed, in which the regional commissions and bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations would play a crucial role.

Various bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system had been identified as collaborative entities for the implementation of the global targets, and it was deemed appropriate that participants should define the enabling steps within the targets that might be incorporated into the work programmes of their organizations, where relevant and feasible, and in keeping with their mandates, interests and resources.

In discussions on the implications for the United Nations system of the third review and appraisal of the implementation of the Plan of Action, it was suggested that more emphasis on inter-agency collaboration on future reviews would be essential.

Among the suggestions for strengthening the Trust Fund for Ageing were: identifying goodwill ambassadors as an effective means of publicizing the Fund and mobilizing resources for it; drawing up clear terms of reference for the Fund and periodically updating its mandate; setting up sponsorship programmes; establishing mechanisms with non-governmental organizations whereby a percentage of their membership fees could be allocated to projects; and developing a compendium of successful projects to be used for fund-raising activities.

The participants also discussed the preparatory activities for the International Year for Older Persons, to be celebrated in 1999. The conceptual framework of a draft programme for the preparation and observance of the Year, at the national, regional and international levels, must be completed by 1995.

In Ecuador, a child helps her grandmother to learn to read

Photo: UNESCO/ Dominique Roger

The meeting concluded by adopting a series of recommendations aimed at strengthening inter-agency cooperation in the field of ageing.

International Conference on Population and Development

A United Nations expert group meeting on population growth and demographic structure took place at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris from 16 to 20 November 1992. Hosted by the Government of France, the meeting was one of six expert-group meetings to prepare for the International Conference on Population and Development to take place in 1994. Scholars, experts and representatives of bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations concluded that, in the 1990s, the issues of population size, growth and distribution remain major challenges to the revitalization of economic growth and social development in developing countries, and to the preservation of the environment.

The meeting addressed a wide array of topics under the rubric of population growth and demographic structure. Among these was population ageing, which was discussed at length. Following the adoption of the World Population Plan of Action by the United Nations World Population Conference held at Bucharest in 1974, which noted the importance of population ageing and its acceleration in the developing countries, the International Plan of Action on Ageing (adopted in 1982) subsequently stressed the centrality of population ageing to social and economic development. Not only are the numbers and proportions of the elderly increasing rapidly in many developing countries, but also the social and economic conditions facing the elderly are undergoing a profound transition.

A representative of the United Nations programme on ageing presented an account of these changing conditions to the meeting in a paper entitled "Developmental implications of population ageing: preliminary results of a multi-country study". The study, which began in 1990, assesses the contributions of the elderly to development, by means of sample surveys of the elderly in selected developing countries, and when completed it will offer policy options to enhance these contributions. One of the significant preliminary findings is that large numbers of the elderly are poor but nonetheless productive, in both social and economic terms.

The meeting adopted a number of recommendations and, in the context of ageing, concluded that the elderly are first and foremost an important human resource for development.

European Year of Older Persons and Solidarity between Generations

The European Year of Older Persons and Solidarity between Generations was officially launched on 21 January 1993 in Brussels, followed by national launches in each member

The logo of the European Year of Older Persons and Solidarity between Generations

State of the European Community two days later.

The launch received the highest possible political support; the event was opened by the President of the Commission of the European Communities, Jacques Delors, who paid tribute to Europe's older citizens. In addition, the new Commissioner for Social Affairs, Padraig Flynn, gave his inaugural speech as Commissioner at the two-day conference preceding the launch.

The aim of the Year is for old and young to come together to celebrate the positive contributions that older people make to society and to reflect on the effect that an ageing population will have on Europe.

The Year turns the spotlight onto older people. Special festivals, exhibitions and media events will occur all over Europe, highlighting their achievements. Conferences, research projects and seminars will explore how Europe can prepare for the challenges of an increasingly older society.

The Commission of the European Communities is acting as an umbrella under which Governments of member States, interested organizations and networks can address the issues in a practical and appropriate way. The Year promotes opportunities for participants from each member State to develop specific responses to the diverse challenges facing the European Community as a whole.

Further information on activities planned for the Year can be obtained from: Agnes Parent, European Year 1993, Bureau C-80 02/28, rue de la Loi 200, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium.

Ethics and the care of the elderly: a project description

Planners, particularly in the health sector, have become increasingly aware of the major problems that will soon be caused by the growing number and proportion of the elderly in developed countries of the world. The first signs of the strain are already present, with an increased proportion of health-care budgets being devoted to their needs. The strain can and will become worse as time goes by, particularly after the turn of the century. Basic questions of resource allocation to meet this problem have already been raised.

What are the ethical problems that will be generated by the increased number and proportion of the elderly? The problems have a bearing on the just allocation of resources to the elderly, the moral obligations and dilemmas of family caregivers, the competition for resources between young and old, and the development of health-care systems that take proper account of the special needs of the old. For the most part, such issues have been neglected, or have been addressed in primarily economic and organizational terms. That will not be enough. The health-care needs of the elderly will pose difficult moral problems, of a kind that will force some basic rethinking of long-standing ethical values. It is imperative that these moral problems be addressed at the same time as the economic, political and social issues are being examined.

Towards that end, an extended and major project has been organized to examine the ethical and related social issues. A project entitled "Ethics and the care of the elderly" takes as its point of departure the basic commitment of all developed societies to provide for the health and welfare of its elderly citizens. This commitment rests on the ancient moral value of reciprocity, that the young have an obligation to care for the old, a commitment reflected in family values and government programmes. But what is the ethical meaning of that commitment now, in the light of growing pressures on health-care resources, increased longevity combined with increased rates of illness and disability, and the changing composition of the family and younger age groups? The nature and details of this commitment need to be explored afresh.

The project is a joint international venture, bringing together representatives of central and western Europe and of North America, those parts of the world that are first feeling the social, medical and economic development of ageing societies. While this project will be valuable for these three

Focus of the project:

ETHICS AND THE CARE OF THE ELDERLY

The project will have five overlapping areas of focus, each representing a major problem for ageing societies:

- *The meaning and significance of old age in contemporary society:* How will different and changing perceptions of old age, and the social place of the elderly, affect society's understanding of their health-care needs?
- *Health care for the elderly and the goals of medicine:* What are appropriate medical goals and aspirations in the care of the elderly? What is a good balance between an emphasis on length of life and on quality of life?
- *Balancing the needs of the young and the old:* What is a fair and equitable way of providing, and balancing, resources for young and old?
- *Resource allocation and social priorities:* If it will not be possible to provide all the medical benefits that science might make possible, given budget constraints, what are sensible priorities and resource allocation patterns?
- *Families, society and long-term care:* How can a good balance be struck between family and government obligations to the elderly, and social systems be developed to provide the elderly with needed social services?

regions, it will have a special value for the Central European countries. They are in the process of significantly reforming their health-care systems and have not, on the whole, been able in the past to give the kind of sustained attention to the elderly that will now be possible and necessary.

Plan of work

The project is jointly managed by the Hastings Center, in Briarcliff Manor, New York, and the Institute for Bioethics in Maastricht, the Netherlands. It is being implemented by a series of meetings held at Maastricht, by the assembling of comparative data from the countries taking part in the project, and by the commissioning of a number of research papers. The research phase will continue to the end of 1993; in 1994 there will be an international conference, a published collection of papers, a group consensus and policy statement, and special conferences in a number of the countries involved in the project.

Further information can be provided by Daniel Callahan, Director, Hastings Center, Briarcliff Manor, New York, NY 10510, United States of America.

National activities

Canada

The most comprehensive survey on ageing ever undertaken in Canada was released last year. The National Survey on Ageing and Independence revealed that close to one third of Canada's population, some 7.8 million persons, were aged 45 years or over in 1991 while 5 million persons (19 per cent) were between 45 and 65 years old, and 2.8 million (11 per cent) were aged 65 years and over. Survey findings indicate that the majority of ageing Canadians perceive their health to be good or excellent.

Another finding shows that the average age of retirement for Canadians is close to 62 years. Those who had not yet retired stated, on average, that they also expected to retire at that age. Moreover, one in two seniors who retired from full-time work reported having made no active preparations for this event.

The findings of the survey have been used to create a national database on a wide range of social, health and retirement issues related to Canadians aged 45 years and over. The survey involved 20,000 respondents, half of them aged 65 years and over and half aged between 45 and 64 years old.

Costa Rica

A strategic plan for the health of the elderly for the next four years has recently been approved in Costa Rica. The plan involves the national geriatric hospital, which is a university hospital with a comprehensive geriatric service covering in-patients, out-patients, a day hospital and community services. The hospital has 180 beds and is located next to the largest university general hospital in the country.

Part of the plan involves a postgraduate training programme on geriatric medicine and gerontology under the sponsorship of the University of Costa Rica (the postgraduate faculty and the faculty and school of medicine) and the national social security system.

Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic was selected as the first country for the adaptation and implementation of a model strategy for productive ageing, which led to the establishment, in 1991, of the National Committee on Productive Ageing to support the expansion of relevant activities throughout the

country. The dedication, in April 1993, of the International Center on Aging was a splendid opportunity, not only to recognize national efforts in this field, but also to pay tribute to the inspiring example of two citizens: Ambassador Julia Tavares de Alvarez and her husband, Dr. Eduardo Alvarez Perello, whose efforts, energy and enthusiasm lay behind the establishment of the Center. Not only had they donated a large estate and property to provide the headquarters for the Center, but they also expressed the wish that the Center should focus on programmes for the health and well-being of older adults and provide opportunities for enhancing older people's empowerment, productivity and health.

The Center will also serve as a catalyst for further projects that can be easily adapted and transplanted to other countries. Thus, the seed that was planted in the Dominican Republic will flower on its home ground and also blossom in other soils.

Ambassador Julia Tavares de Alvarez with her husband, Dr. Eduardo Alvarez Perello, at the dedication ceremony of the International Center on Aging in the Dominican Republic

Guatemala

To celebrate the International Day for the Elderly in 1992, the Ministry of the Interior in Guatamala published 25,000 copies of a paper, for distribution to institutions concerned with ageing. The paper publicizes the rights of the elderly, draws attention to their situation in society, and encourages the communities in which they live to both support and appreciate their contributions.

The central pages of the document contains the recommendations of the International Plan of Action on Ageing.

Japan

The Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning (JOICFP) has established a project to be implemented during 1992-1995. The project, supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is entitled "Promotion of awareness and policy formulation on aging". Several events have already taken place within the framework of the project.

A preparatory meeting held at Bangkok paved the way for the establishment of a collaborative network of policy makers, researchers and programme managers on population ageing in the region covering Asia and the Pacific and the creation of an informal advisory committee comprising experts on population ageing from the region. The meeting, held 1-2 October 1992, was organized by JOICFP in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). It was attended by nine experts in the policy aspects of ageing from Asia and representatives of ESCAP, JOICFP and UNFPA.

The aim of the new project is to develop a regional network on ageing through seminars, workshops and publications focusing on information exchange and technical assistance to strengthen the knowledge and capacity of policy makers and administrators in formulating appropriate policies and programmes on ageing in participating countries.

Under the theme "Financial security for old age", representatives of nine countries gathered in Japan to consider ways of supporting the elderly, promoting their self-reliance and enabling them to contribute to society. Participants focused on Japan's experiences and observed activities for the aged during a field trip to Hiroshima Prefecture. The seminar, held from 18 November to 2 December 1992, also served as an effective forum for the exchange of information, experiences and strategies between participants to strengthen further the collaborative network of policy planners, programme managers and experts in the region.

Participants were introduced to policies and programmes for the aged in Japan by officials of the Japanese Government and experts on population ageing. The presentations focused on the impact of population ageing on Japanese society and issues related to economic security for the aged.

Source: Extracts from *JOICFP News*, November 1992 and January 1993.

Non-governmental organization activities

The International Federation of Associations for the Elderly (FIAPA) was established in 1980 and has affiliated associations in 37 countries, with a membership of over 100 million persons.

Part of its celebrations for the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the International Plan of Action on Ageing was the Fifth National Day for the Elderly, held at Dakar, Senegal in February 1992. At the invitation of the President of Senegal, members of the Board of Directors and Science Council of FIAPA went to Dakar to celebrate this important event. The celebrations concluded with the holding of the ninth International Colloquium in Barcelona, Spain, to coincide with the International Day for the Elderly.

In addition, FIAPA participation in the anniversary year included local programmes of activity by the 1992 Committees, which comprise 461 national committees. Numerous programmes involved activities focusing on the personal development of the elderly and on their efforts to play a useful role in social life.

Perhaps the most far-reaching of FIAPA activities to celebrate the anniversary was the survey it conducted on the preoccupations and aspirations of the elderly. The survey, in the form of a questionnaire containing 125 items, was translated into six languages, and distributed to members of associations, those elderly not belonging to any group and those living in residential homes, as well as those in the 50-60 age bracket. About 2,300 people from 20 countries responded to the questionnaire, and a report, in three languages, was forwarded to the United Nations that FIAPA hopes will make a direct contribution from the elderly themselves towards the definition of the United Nations' strategy for the next decade in the area of ageing.

The survey revealed that positive thinking, open-mindedness and dynamism characterize the desire of the elderly to play an active role in their societies. Their main concern is for the family and for society and their main aspiration is affirming their place in society by:

(a) Becoming involved in world events: their opinions, ideas and reflections should be taken into account since they can throw a new light on certain important decisions for society;

(b) Counselling the younger generation: they are the living memory of the world, representing the link between the past and the future without whom the latter cannot be envisaged with any kind of serenity;

(c) Recalling the importance of human relationships in order to help build a warm and humane society;

(d) Drawing attention to their specific needs as consumers.

The report concludes with a statement from an older person who summed up the main aspiration of the elderly in a quotation from Antoine de Saint-Exupery: "If you wish to unite mankind, give men something to build together."

Publications

Changing Age Structures, 1990-2015: demographic and economic consequences and implications

Countries in the regions covered by the Economic Commission for Europe (all countries in Europe plus Canada and the United States of America) have experienced important shifts in the age structure of their populations during recent years: very low levels of fertility combined with declining mortality levels among the older age groups have resulted in the growth of the elderly populations. In some cases, the ageing of populations might even lead to a population decline in the coming decades.

These shifts in the age structure of populations are likely to result in a large number of important implications for governmental programmes and legislation. Consequently, ECE organized a seminar on the demographic and economic consequences and implications of changing population age structures, which was held at Ottawa from 24 to 28 September 1990 and attended by over 80 experts from 28 countries and from national and international organizations.

The papers presented by participants have been published in a study that reflects the international academic discussion on the ageing of populations in Europe and North America as well as the scope of policy options available to Governments and the administrative and social consequences of population changes, including migration.

The 407-page publication contains papers dealing with the following

main subjects: causes of changes in the age structure; consequences of future changes in the age structure for public revenues and expenditures; implications for the labour force of the changing population age structure; the role of fertility and migration as adjustment mechanisms for changing population age structures; the changing structures of families and households; national approaches to developing informed demographic policies; and the situation in countries in other regions of the world.

Copies of the publication can be obtained from the Sales Department, United Nations, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland, price $US 80.00, in English only, by quoting Sales No. GV.E.92.0.20.

Adding Health to Years

The first practical handbook on older people's health aimed specifically at the developing countries, *Adding Health to Years*, has been written by Gill Garrett, a British nurse specializing in the health of older people. The handbook has been reviewed by an international panel to ensure that it can also be used by health workers and family care-givers alike throughout the world.

The 160-page handbook is fully illustrated and written in an easily accessible style. The 28 chapters include the topics of health education and nutrition in old age, as well as general health problems.

Adding Health to Years is available from HelpAge International, St. James' Walk, London EC1R 0BE, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It costs £2.50/$US5.00 for developing countries and £7.95/$US 16.00 for developed countries, plus 20 per cent for postage and packing.

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V.93-86204

ISSN 0251-6802

Printed in Austria